

# REAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY



OPENING DOORS FOR PARENT AND CHILD COMMUNICATION

# OPENING ACTIVITY

Where did you first learn about sex?

- Stand by the station that answers this question for you.
- Have a mini discussion with your peers about this first lesson.
- Pick one team member to share out to larger group a summary of discussion.



# “THE TALK” SURVEY

1. \_\_\_ *The media is the single most influential source of information for teens about sex, more than parents or friends.*

**FALSE**

In surveys, teens say their parents influence their decisions about sex more than any other source -- including the media and their friends.

## “THE TALK” SURVEY

2. \_\_\_ *Teens today tend to have sex at earlier ages than their parents did.*

**FALSE**

Rates of teen sex are at their lowest rates in history. Which means your teen is likely to wait longer than you or your peers did.

# “THE TALK” SURVEY

3. \_\_\_ *Your child wants to talk with you about sex.*

**TRUE**

Children want their parents to talk with them about sex and nearly 9 out of 10 teenagers say that it would be easier to avoid sex if their parents talked openly and honestly about it.

## “THE TALK” SURVEY

4. \_\_\_ *Having your child ask you about sex is a sign that he or she has started or is about to start engaging in sex.*

**FALSE**

Kids are naturally curious. They are likely to ask about sex as they would anything else that they see gets a lot of interest and attention.

## “THE TALK” SURVEY

5. \_\_\_ *Talking with children about sex will make them think you're somehow giving them permission to have sex.*

**FALSE**

Research shows that teens don't think you're condoning sex just because you're talking about it.

# “THE TALK” SURVEY

6. \_\_\_ *My child is gay because they have shown interest in dating someone of the same sex.*

**FALSE**

While it's obvious your child is considering their sexuality, it's not a hard-fast guarantee they are gay. Many teenagers, more often girls than boys, experiment with the idea of same sex relationships before settling on a heterosexual relationship.

You have a wonderful opportunity here to talk openly about their feelings in a loving caring way. You don't have to agree and you don't have to bake a cake and have a party, but you don't have to condemn them either. As a matter of fact, if you condemn them, they will likely run headlong into the relationship just to spite you. If they are gay, you will have created a barrier that will be hard to overcome.



# “THE TALK” SURVEY

7. \_\_\_ *Most people become sexually active during their teen years.*

**TRUE**

The median age when people begin having sex is 17. While you can influence your children to wait until they are mature enough to make adult decisions about sex, you can help ensure they protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases whenever they decide to start.

# “THE TALK” SURVEY

8. \_\_\_ Talking with children about sex from a young age is better than waiting to have a major "facts of life" talk when they are teenagers.

**TRUE**

Giving kids accurate information about sex from an early age, including using correct names for body parts, makes it easier for them to learn. You can create "teachable moments" when something related to sexuality appears on TV or in a song. Children are more likely to listen and learn what you want them to know if you share knowledge over time -- than they are receiving a sudden information dump. Especially if they sense you're reluctantly dealing with a subject that freaks you out. Delaying your teaching until "The Talk" means that, until then, they'll be forming ideas based on information and misinformation from the media and friends. This can be hard to overcome.

## “THE TALK” SURVEY

9. \_\_\_ *Teens today are more likely to use condoms and contraceptives than their parents did at the same age.*

**TRUE**

Teens are more likely to use condoms and contraceptives than ever before. Even if you want your children to delay having sex until they pass a special milestone, you want them to be among those who understand how to make responsible decisions whenever they start.

## “THE TALK” SURVEY

10. \_\_\_ *Most parents are opposed to having sex education taught in schools.*

**FALSE**

Most parents want schools to teach sex education. In North Carolina, for example, more than 90 percent of parents say they want schools to provide education about sexuality.

# “THE TALK” SURVEY

11. \_\_ Parents who don't talk with children about sex miss an opportunity to pass on their values about sex.

**TRUE**

The best way to instill your values about sex in your children is to be open and honest with them, teach them what you want them to know, and show them you trust them.

# HAVING THE TALK



# WHO ARE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS?

- Middle school is the transitional period of moving from being a child to an adolescent.
- Erik Erikson Developmental Stage
  - Age 12 to 18: “Identity vs. Role Confusion”
- This means they are trying to figure it all out, including sexuality



# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The physical development of the adolescent is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most rapid period of human growth (after infancy)

- Girls- can begin as early as 8-9 years (average onset 10-11) of age through 17 years
- Boys- can begin as early as 9.5 years of age (average onset 12-13) through 17-18 yrs. Males can continue to grow until 21 years.

What happens during this time?

- Growth spurt of skeletal & muscular systems/Weight gain “The awkward years”
- Development of Primary and Secondary Sex Characteristics
- Continued Brain Development



# DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SEX CHARACTERISTICS

**Primary Sex Characteristics:** physical characteristics directly related to reproduction. (sex organs)

**Secondary Sex Characteristics:** physical characteristics not directly related to reproduction. (facial/body hair, breasts development, voice changes)

**Hormonal Changes will cause:**

- Boys- testosterone increased up to 18 times more than childhood, testicle and penile growth
- Girls- estradiol increased up to 8 times more than childhood, onset of first menstrual cycle
- Breast development in girls, pubic and underarm hair, facial hair and voice changes in boys.

**Other hormonal changes:**

Adrenal gland is overactive and/or under active cause sudden rush in energy or lethargy.

Sweat gland is very active cause body odor, oily hair and acne.

## CONTINUED BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Recent research suggests that teens' brains are not completely developed until the early 20s. Areas involved in more basic functions mature first: those involved, for example, in the processing of information from the senses, and in controlling movement. The parts of the brain responsible for more "top-down" control, **controlling impulses**, and **planning ahead**—the hallmarks of adult behavior—are among the last to mature. NIMH ([nimh.com.nih.gov](http://nimh.com.nih.gov))

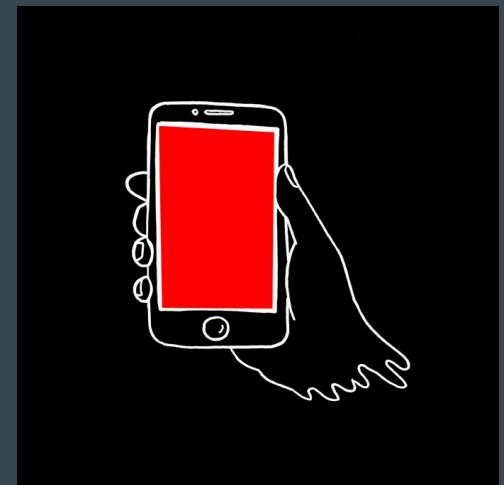
# HOW DO THESE CHANGES AFFECT ADOLESCENTS?

- Inquisitive- Teens may ask more direct questions about sex and sexuality
- Frequently sleep longer, may be more clumsy, become concerned about their weight and body image, and compare themselves to peers
- Struggle with not feeling like a child or an adult
- Indestructible – It will not happen to me
- Craving independence - yet comforted by boundaries

# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**Sexual Orientation** describes a person's physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to another person. Everyone has a sexual orientation

- Does not always relate to sexual behavior
- Example: what are we attracted to in our spouses/partners other than sex?
  - Asexual, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Pansexual, Questioning
- For most young people, sexual orientation has more to do with identity and community than it does with sexual activity
- It is important to have conversations where you acknowledge the vast range of ways to express sexual orientation that does not only focus on sex acts



SO.....

## HOW WILL YOUR CHILD LEARN ABOUT SEX?

- Friends
- Media
- Experience
- School
- Religious Organizations
- Parents

# FRIENDS AND SOCIAL PRESSURE

- Seeking knowledge and learning together
- Searching for identity
- Development of self concept
- Establishing new friends and forming cliques
- Craving acceptance
- Comparing self to others
- Breaking away from parents
- Peers become more important

# CHILDREN WILL LEARN FROM PEERS

*The question is ...*

**Do you want this to be the primary  
source of information?**

# MEDIA AS RESOURCE

## According to the Guttmacher Institute:

- 55% of 7th–12th graders say they have looked up health information online in order to learn more about an issue affecting themselves or someone they know
- Little data exists on adolescents' use of the Internet to look up sexual health information although it is likely a source of information
- Teens may be accessing websites with inaccurate sexual health information
  - In a recent study of 177 websites with sexual health information, 46% including inaccurate information on contraception



# MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

- Television
- Movies
- Magazines
- Blogs
- Websites
- Music
- Cell phones/Texting
- Social media



# TOP SITES

- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Google+
- Youtube
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Periscope



lindsaylohanthony:

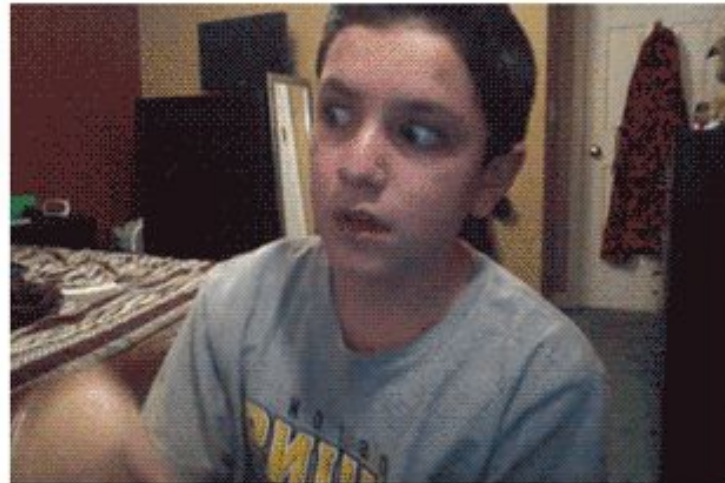
268



Do you have a Tumblr?



Anonymous



Ask lindsaylohanthony a question

# CHILDREN WILL LEARN FROM MEDIA

*The question is ...*

**Do you want this to be the primary  
source of information?**

# CHILDREN WILL LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

*The question is ...*

**Don't you think someone with accurate knowledge should speak to them first?**

## **CHILDREN WILL LEARN FROM SCHOOL**

We try to help by offering sex education in schools, but

*The question is...*

**Shouldn't YOU be your child's first educator?**

**YES!!!!**

Though talking about sex is not an easy task,  
someone as important as YOU needs to do it!!!



# “THE TALK”

Provide information that is accurate, timely, and presented in such a way as to be understood.

## Preschool through Elementary school:

- Boys vs. girls
- Public vs. private
- Basic facts including body parts
- Introduction to puberty (your changing body)
- Introduction to menstrual care
- Appropriate vs inappropriate touching/consent

# “THE TALK”

## Middle School and beyond:

- Puberty and menstruation
- Ejaculation and wet dreams
- How to say “no”/consent
- Masturbation
- Public restroom use
- Attraction and sexual feelings
- Relationships and dating
- Personal responsibility and family values
- Love vs. sex
- Sexual preference
- Laws regarding sexuality
- Pregnancy, safer sex, birth control
- Watching pornography



# KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Talk to your teen
- Be supportive as your child tries to figure it out
- Don't criticize or compare the teens to others
- Provide honest answers to teens about sex
- Be understanding of their need for physical space
- Be understanding of their need for privacy
- Be open that they may or may not share your same beliefs
- Provide stability and consistency during this time of internal chaos
- Be available to listen even though you might not be the first person they choose
- Stay involved in school
- Get to know friends and introduce yourself to friends parents
- Monitor and moderate electronic communication
- Watch media together and discuss
- Stay informed about the latest social networking, electronic communication, media sources

# RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

- Advocates for Youth
  - [www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents-sex-ed-center-home](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents-sex-ed-center-home)
- Sex, etc.
  - [www.sexetc.org/parents-professionals](http://www.sexetc.org/parents-professionals)
- Planned Parenthood Federation of America
  - [www.plannedparenthood.org/parents/talking-to-kids-about-sex-and-sexuality](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/parents/talking-to-kids-about-sex-and-sexuality)
- Kids Health
  - [www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/](http://www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/)
- The Parents Project (LGBTQ support)
  - [www.mykidisgay.com/resources/](http://www.mykidisgay.com/resources/)
- The Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
  - [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)